

Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES)

What is it?

The NCOES provides non-commissioned officers (NCO) with progressive and sequential leader, technical and tactical training relevant to the duties, responsibilities and missions they will perform in operational units after graduation. The training and education process for the NCO starts with an initial, branch-immateral, leadership development course; followed by a basic, branch-specific level; an advanced, branch-specific level; and culminates with a branch- immateral senior level course. The NCOES is comprised of the following educational opportunities:

- **Warrior Leader Course (WLC):** A branch-immateral course that provides basic leadership training to allow Soldiers in the pay grade of Private First Class through Staff Sergeant (SSG) the opportunity to acquire the leader skills, knowledge and experience needed to lead team/squad size units.
- **Advanced Leader Course (ALC):** ALC consists of both an 80 hour, 90-day highly facilitated web-based common core program and a branch-specific resident phase designed for the Soldiers military occupation specialty. This course provides Soldiers selected for promotion to SSG with an opportunity to acquire the leader, technical, and tactical skills, knowledge and experience needed to lead squad/platoon size units.
- **Senior Leader Course (SLC):** A branch-specific course that provides an opportunity for Soldiers selected for promotion to Sergeant First Class (SFC) to acquire the leader, technical, and tactical skills, knowledge and experience needed to lead platoon/company size units.
- **Sergeants Major Course (SMC):** The capstone enlisted training for the Master Sergeant (MSG), MSG (Promotable), Sergeant Major, and Command Sergeant Major prepares them for troop and staff assignments. This course is task based and performance oriented, focusing on leadership, combat and sustainment operations, team building, communication skills, training management, and professional development. It prepares the NCO for responsibility at the Battalion and Brigade level.

What has the Army done?

The NCOES has undergone tremendous transformations in support of the Army's goals to develop agile leaders and afford NCOs an opportunity to acquire the skills, and knowledge needed to perform more complex duties and missions of greater responsibility. The Army continues to explore the following professional development initiatives that enhance professional military education through traditional and non-traditional learning opportunities in support of individual and collective training:

- **Structured Self-Development (SSD):** To foster the life-long learning environment, the Army has created a defined set of required learning, which is sequenced across a Soldier's career and is linked to and synchronized with operational and institutional domains. While supporting the Life Long Learning Strategy and promoting continuous growth, SSD builds knowledge and skills through a sequence of learning approaches with the adjuncts of formal education and

experiential learning. SSD is centrally managed content that must be completed at specified career points as a prerequisite for attendance at Warrior through Senior Leader courses and the Sergeant Majors Course.

- Mobile Training Team (MTT): The Army established MTTs for the WLC and 20 Military Occupation Specialty's (MOSSs) for ALC which allows Soldiers to train at their home stations and to improve synchronization of NCOES with Army Force Generation.
- NCOES Transformation: The Army has adapted NCOES to the needs of the Army at war by refining programs of instruction (POI) and embedding combat leaders' tasks into all NCOES programs. Flexibility in training has increased through distributed learning and reduction of course lengths which allow NCOs to attend and complete training at more beneficial times and locations.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?

The Army continues to move forward with the implementation of multi-component NCO Academies and cross component use of NCO Academies as part of the One Army School System concept. These concepts focus on where training capacity, especially NCO Academies can be optimized and synchronized regardless of component (Active and Reserve Component) to support the Army's training requirement.

Effective April 2013, SSD Level 1 becomes a prerequisite for attendance at WLC, and June 2013, SSD Levels 3 and 4 become prerequisites for SLC and SMC, respectively. In January 2015 SSD Level 5 becomes a requirement for accepting a nominative position.

Why is this important to the Army?

The NCOES produces leaders who are disciplined, instilled with the Warrior Ethos, understand Army values and are fully competent to perform their duties in support of decisive action. The Increase of MTTs reduces the NCOES backlog. The Army executes NCOES with the understanding that growing and sustaining quality NCOs requires an investment in educating our leaders.